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General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

105th plenary meeting
Monday, 15 April 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon), Vice- President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Agenda item 12 *(continued)*

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/847)

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance on its twelfth meeting (A/50/525)

Letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the President of the General Assembly (A/50/926)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.69)

The Acting President: This morning the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 49/136 of 19 December 1994, will begin holding plenary meetings devoted to public administration and development.

Before the Assembly begins its consideration of the question of public administration and development, the President of the General Assembly has requested that I deliver the following statement on his behalf:

"We have resumed the fiftieth session of the General Assembly to examine an important question — public administration and development — at a time when revitalizing and reforming the public sector is a priority on the agendas of many Member States.

"The 1990s have brought an extraordinary and demanding set of challenges to public administration throughout the world. Governments of developed and developing countries are now faced with a complex set of external and internal factors, ranging from the strains of adjusting to a new global dynamic to limits imposed by dwindling resources and demands for participatory government.

"Governments are re-evaluating their decision-making and policy-formulating practices. Many are abandoning conventional measures in favour of new and innovative practices that aim for the attainable goal of improved administrative performance.

"The phrase 'doing more with less' has become a conviction born of necessity. Public-sector reform has proved to be an accepted modality for development, rather than a passing trend. For many Governments, the ongoing challenge is to try to redefine their role in the pursuit of sustainable economic growth and development, to improve efficiency, to seek effectiveness and to encourage responsiveness in the way government functions.

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"Because the issue of reform is of such importance, Member States believe there is a need to review globally the experiences of countries and identify sound practices in the planning and management of development. Throughout the world, and particularly among the developed countries, old bureaucratic structures and corresponding methods are slowly giving way to new, more innovative consumer-oriented and participatory forms of government. The old top-down approaches are slowly being replaced by new patterns of management in which deconcentration, decentralization and debureaucratization are prominently featured as paths which lead not only to greater efficiency but also to grass-roots democracy. As such, the demarcation between the government and the governed is less distinct.

"For many of the developing countries and countries with economies in transition, however, the challenge of re-engineering their public sectors takes on an unprecedented urgency. As members are fully aware, the necessity of doing more with less is not for Governments alone. The United Nations, like many of the Member States, is currently undergoing an important reform process. It, too, is faced with a host of similar problems, ranging from the constraints imposed by diminished resources to securing its appropriate place in the new global dynamic.

"Despite these limitations, the United Nations remains committed to its founding principles. At no other point in the 50-year history of the Organization has the phrase 'doing more with less' been so relevant or so actively practiced. The strength of the United Nations lies in its being an impartial global institution and in its capacity for supporting the human and institutional environments within which the public sector, financial institutions and the private sector can operate effectively and efficiently while still preserving, in the words of Albert Einstein,

'a whole-hearted, indivisible commitment to humanity'".

This resumed session provides us with an excellent opportunity to exchange experiences and to expand international awareness of the key role public administration plays in the development process. The President of the General Assembly and I look forward to the discussion that will take place during the course of the week.

I now call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: This resumed General Assembly session on public administration and development is especially timely, and the deliberations to be held in the coming days will have particular significance. The topic to be discussed is particularly appropriate: just as States depend on efficient public administration for good governance, so too the United Nations must constantly reform. The Assembly's deliberations, therefore, are especially relevant at this time of United Nations reform.

The 1990s continue to be a decade of fundamental change. Global transformations have dramatically influenced the ways in which Member States act and operate. All nations — irrespective of their level of economic advancement or political development — are having to rethink critical issues of governance and purpose. Many are having to reassess fundamental aspects of the relationship between government and society itself. No task is more critical for any State than the creation of a national *modus vivendi* — in economic relations, in political relations, in social relations and in global relations. Public administration has a vital role in this endeavour. Public administration is the practical mechanism for turning the objectives, aspirations and decisions of States into actual reality. If public administration is ineffective, the best plans can make little progress. If public administration is corrupt, the interests of citizens cannot be protected.

States at all levels have sought to enhance existing capacities and improve the delivery of goods and services. States in transition have had to re-examine traditional ideas about the role of government in society. Other States have felt the need to place emphasis on building up basic structures of governance. Some advanced States have seen a need to re-engineer structures and downsize or redirect staff.

But Governments, while attempting to become leaner, more efficient or more globally competitive, must also not forget their fundamental responsibilities to ensure peace, promote social justice, protect the environment and uphold the rule of law. These central responsibilities define not only the character of a State, but also its success.

Public administration systems require constant attention and reform if they are to respond effectively to social, economic and political change. This is especially

true in the developing world, where the imperatives of sustainable development impose unique burdens on public administration systems.

Moreover, as technology and social, economic and political change transform the world, managerial knowledge, skills and tools, which were once sufficient to maintain operational efficiency and performance of the public administration system, no longer satisfy the basic needs of government.

Improving public administration systems has rightly been a special priority for the United Nations. The United Nations programme in public administration and finance has led this function on behalf of the Secretary-General. The report of the twelfth meeting of Experts on Public Administration and Finance and my own report on public administration and development highlight some of the things being done.

Attention is also drawn to some of the new challenges and unmet needs Member States now face. Enhancing the capacity of Governments to carry out governmental functions, implement governmental policies and make governmental efforts more effective is therefore a key priority.

Member States have sought and received United Nations assistance for a wide range of activities intended to strengthen and enhance public institutions and public administration. In many sectors, only the United Nations can demonstrate both the impartiality and the expertise necessary to help Member States achieve results. United Nations support has included assistance to Member States in introducing modern civil service codes, reforming customs systems, strengthening taxation policies and implementing taxation reforms. Assistance has also included efforts to improve systems of recruitment, career planning and decision-making.

The World Bank has supported measures to strengthen personnel management in government and civil service ministries, including the installation of human resources management and information systems. More generally, United Nations support for improved public sector management has aided management training programmes and contributed to national efforts in development planning, public investment programmes, statistical analysis, database development, debt management and decentralization.

Through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) the United Nations has also supported national efforts to improve bureaucratic accountability, particularly in relation to the management of public funds: a vital aspect of institution-building. Assistance has been given in establishing open and rigorous systems of auditing, procurement and accounting. Technical assistance has been provided in budgeting and revenue collection.

Effective public administration in a modern State especially requires legal institutions that are effective. Towards this goal the United Nations has provided direct and indirect assistance for activities such as drafting constitutions, instituting administrative and financial reforms, strengthening human rights laws, enhancing judicial structures and training human rights officials.

These and other efforts demonstrate the high priority that good public administration demands. Public administration is the backbone of effective government. It is an essential ingredient if global aspirations for development are to be realized.

This resumed session will arouse increased international awareness of the vital role of public administration in development. It highlights the need to accord public administration reform a high priority on the development agenda. It underscores the need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to facilitate improvements in the public administration systems of Member States, especially those in developing countries and countries with transitional economies.

I have stated many times that peace and development must go hand in hand. Without peace there can be no development; without development there can be no lasting peace. Effective government is essential to achieving the aims of both the "Agenda for Peace" and the "Agenda for Development".

Today I wish to draw special attention to the importance of United Nations efforts in the field of democratization as an integral part of efforts to enhance public administration world wide. The creation of a truly responsive and effective public service requires participatory decision-making; this stands at the core of the democratization process.

Democratization is often the most important factor for improved public administration. Democratization increases accountability; it encourages development of a professional rather than a political public administration; it is the enemy of corruption, inefficiency and poor

management; and it provides incentives for maximum effectiveness in the delivery of goods and services.

The results of your deliberations this week will form an integral part of the overall change that will further define the United Nations and its role in the twenty-first century. Your leadership is critical. The mandate you devise over the coming days will ultimately define the shape of the Organization's future programmes and the direction of its future activities in support of public administration. This is a vital responsibility. I wish you success in your work.

The Acting President: I call on Mr. Messaoud Mansouri, Minister for Administrative Affairs of the Office of the Prime Minister of Morocco, who will introduce draft resolution A/50/L.69 in the course of his statement.

Mr. Mansouri (Morocco) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I would first like to thank the United Nations most sincerely for convening this resumed General Assembly session on public administration and development. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the particular interest he has taken in the modernization of public administration and for the very commendable initiatives he has taken in this area.

Economic policy and development have been the subject of constant discussion and have become major concerns for States. Problems of indebtedness and financial imbalances have had a negative impact on economic systems. The gradual and irreversible globalization of the economy has also created problems. Competition is fierce, and high quality services must be provided to societies.

Today more than ever before, public administrations must provide an institutional framework for economic and social reform. International and regional organizations must do their share to enhance public administration.

Ministers of Public Administration from African countries in particular are aware of the challenges they face. In response to a request by the Government of Morocco, African ministers attended the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of the Civil Service in Morocco, sponsored by the United Nations and by the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development. The Conference met in June 1994 and adopted the Tangier Declaration (A/49/495, annex), which aimed to make the international community more aware of the problems facing public administration in developing countries, particularly in Africa.

Mr. Berrocal Soto (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Government of Morocco also undertook the follow-up to the Conference. This process led to the adoption of resolution 49/136 on 19 December 1994. The Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance met from 31 July to 11 August 1995 and adopted a report (A/50/525) containing the Group's recommendations to national Governments and to the United Nations. A number of regional coordination meetings were then held in order to adopt appropriate initiatives to ensure the success of ongoing efforts.

I had the honour of presiding over the follow-up committee to the Tangier Declaration, which met at Libreville, Gabon in September 1995. The committee studied the recommendations of the Group of Experts and the role of the United Nations in public administration in developing countries in general, and in African countries in particular. Recommendations were adopted and submitted to the relevant bodies of the United Nations.

Experience has shown that policies adopted by developing countries to restructure public administration have failed to take account of social aspects and have not generally led to the implementation of coherent economic initiatives. Governments and international financial organizations have been increasingly interested in the social and human costs that arose after problems were encountered as developing countries began to apply structural adjustment policies for their economies in order to check inflation, and as they sought to address social problems and employment issues. With the enactment of liberalization policies and the resulting increase in competition and shifting role of the State sector, it became necessary to redefine the responsibilities of public administration, and to devise long-term strategic programmes. Modernizing public administration in order to establish clear parameters for a modern, innovative civil service must include among its priorities the updating of the private sector and enhancing the ability to compete in foreign markets, while taking into account the economic and social balance required and ensuring sustainable development and employment.

Building a modern State is absolutely essential. In the last two decades Morocco has adopted a policy of modernization of the civil service to enable it to face the new imperatives of economic and social development. Since the late 1970s Morocco has pursued a policy of decentralization in the areas of regional and local

administration. In the early 1980s Morocco was one of the first developing countries to promote liberalization of the economy and the streamlining of administrative procedures which hampered other initiatives. We also successfully adopted privatization initiatives and tried to rationalize the civil service.

Morocco plans to continue its modernization efforts on three fronts: the economy, education and management. These priorities were set by King Hassan II, who felt that these form the backbone of sustainable development. As members know, modernization of the public administration is the cornerstone of any structural reform programme, and the Government of Morocco has accordingly made it one of its priorities.

International conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations have shown that there is a close relationship between the various components of sustainable development, and that there is fresh scope for productive cooperation between developing countries and international organizations. Doubtless, all States need to share their experiences in order to better apply their national programmes on the basis of recommendations made by specialized agencies. We attach particular importance to these points.

I would like to speak about the priorities set forth at the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of the Civil Service held at Tangier. It was felt at the Conference that the political and economic changes of recent years have led to new challenges for African civil services. They must now not only provide for economic development and modernization of their administrations, but must also create the necessary conditions for effective action in the domestic and international private sectors. They must also ensure rural development, combat geographic imbalances and try to establish a new relationship with local communities.

The economic and financial crisis of the 1980s had a negative impact on African civil services. Social questions then rose to paramount importance. African public administrations therefore had to implement new policies attaching greater importance to social issues while still ensuring financial balance and carrying out the necessary austerity policies.

The African ministers stressed that to be sustainable economic and social policies must be responsive and effective. Investment in human resources is the basis for growth and development. Development policies of the past did not attain all their objectives because they did not take into account the close relationship between development programmes and the proper use of human resources. The Tangier Conference therefore felt that it was necessary to take into account the human component, which is the basis of all development. This is what is at stake in the reform of public administration: it must highlight human resources.

We must also overcome obstacles in the structural reform of public administration. This requires systematic reforms to modernize public management. The similarity of the obstacles facing developing countries makes it essential that we coordinate and share experiences to meet the challenges of economic and social development.

The efforts of developing countries have not produced the desired results. As a result, international organizations have decided that development policies cannot succeed unless public administration is improved to ensure good governance and the proper management of development projects in the public and private sectors.

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Tangier Declaration, the report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance and the Secretary-General's report on public administration and development, and as a contribution from the Kingdom of Morocco to the objectives of this resumed session, we have the honour of introducing a draft resolution designed to strengthen public administration as a major tool for economic and social development. The draft resolution also tries to highlight the role of the United Nations as the prime mover in ensuring modernization of public administration and strengthening South-South cooperation.

To that end we propose, first, to strengthen the role of the State to ensure economic and social balance, combating inequalities in those areas by ensuring investment in human resources. Secondly, we must establish the conditions necessary for enhancing the role of the private sector. We must also look at taxation and financial policies and encourage private investment. Thirdly, we must examine administrative structures so as to enhance the viability of administrative bodies and ensure decentralization. Fourthly, we must improve the administrative system so as to offer better services and streamline administrative procedures. We must also adapt projects to real needs and enhance the capacity of State bodies and organs to define effective social policies. Fifthly, we must establish the conditions necessary for ensuring sustainable economic growth, create

employment and deal with education and training, providing the necessary resources.

The successes achieved by some developing countries must be extended to other countries. This will require coordination among the countries of the South. The United Nations is the ideal framework for providing such coordination.

First, this will involve encouraging exchanges of experience, research and information so as to ensure follow-up of national administrative reform programmes. It will also involve strengthening Government activities for training. Secondly, we should strengthen the role of regional organizations and institutions dealing with public administration and development, enabling their experts to carry out research and to submit advice to the countries involved. This would also involve social programmes, and national capacity would have to be stepped up in order to carry them out. Thirdly, States should be helped in the institutional area. Fourthly, efforts should be made to follow up development projects and provide financing. Financial assistance should also be provided to build up infrastructure and fund projects in that area. Finally, we should support the proposal to make the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance into an independent body so as to strengthen its role in the area of public administration and development. We also propose the establishment of a working group to finalize the draft in order to facilitate its adoption by consensus.

I wish this resumed session of the General Assembly every success.

The Acting President: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed at 5 p.m. today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I therefore request those representatives who wish to participate in the debate but have not yet inscribed their names on the list to do so as soon as possible.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. Giovanni Motzo, Minister for Civil Services, Regional and Institutional Affairs of Italy, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Motzo (Italy): The European Union wishes to reaffirm the great importance it attaches to this resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development. We have taken note with interest of the report of the Group of Experts on Public Administration and Finance, contained in document A/50/525, and of the report of the Secretary-General on public administration and development contained in document A/50/847.

The 1990s have been a decade of political and economic upheaval throughout the world, and there has been an increasing tendency towards democratization and the participation of non-governmental actors in development, with a particularly strong emphasis on the need for good governance and for sound financial and economic policies at the national level and a greater reliance on market forces and on the private sector as basic requirements of development.

The recent cycle of major international conferences recognized this evolution. The role of public administration must be reviewed if we are to face the increasing complexity of development challenges, such as the eradication of poverty, the growing interdependence of societies, the promotion of social justice and of a participatory democracy, the globalization of the economy, the protection of the environment and the need to increase internal stability in countries vulnerable to civil conflicts. The overall objective should be to improve the full integration of socio-economic and environmental concerns at all levels in public administration decision-making and management.

In order to respond to these challenges at all levels, Governments have the responsibility to create or maintain a supportive institutional, legal and regulatory framework. This will help realize the goal of people-centred sustainable development, reaffirmed by the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, and allow all to enjoy a higher quality of life and enhance the overall management of public services.

In this new context of greater reliance on market forces and the private sector, Governments should reassess their role in economic development. However, fundamental functions such as maintaining peace and security and protecting human rights, democracy, social justice and the environment cannot be shifted to the private sector.

Rebuilding and developing a mechanism of governance and public administration is, indeed, one of the primary concerns facing nations emerging from war

or civil strife and countries in the process of transition from centrally planned to market-oriented economies.

At the same time, improving governance and public administration should be a universal goal, since all countries face the complex task of introducing and increasing efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness in the their Governments' activities.

It is critically important that Governments enact policies to promote democratic and participatory institutions. It is equally important for Governments to facilitate the development of productive sectors; mobilize national energies and resources for the provision of human capital and institution-building, infrastructure and basic social services; develop long-term analysis, planning and evaluation; promote sustainable development and equitable distribution of growth benefits; and ensure the coordination of all development activities.

The European Union believes that during this resumed session the General Assembly should reaffirm the need for the United Nations to set an example of effective administration and efficient use of available resources; that it should recognize, while acknowledging the diversity of experiences, traditions, and administrative systems, a set of general principles guiding Member States in their efforts to maintain and strengthen democratic institutions, streamline their Government machinery, promote interaction between private and public sectors, improve their economic and financial management, and encourage decentralization and the participation of all actors in the decision-making process; that it should ensure that the existing structures inside and outside the United Nations system are better coordinated to assist Member States in this endeavour, particularly developing countries and countries in transition.

The European Union accords special importance to several of those principles. The legitimacy of Governments rests on the existence of democratic, effective and participatory processes that allow the people to play an active and influential role in decisions that affect their lives and to freely elect their representatives. In situations of post-conflict restoration and rehabilitation it is essential to involve all segments of society and to strengthen mechanisms of national reconciliation. Democratic decision-making, together with the rule of law and transparent and accountable governance, is essential for the effectiveness of development policies, for the creation of a favourable environment for private-sector activities, and for ensuring that economic and social reforms have popular support and that the benefits of growth are equitably distributed.

A stable legal framework, fair and efficient law enforcement and equal access to public services and justice, in accordance with international standards of human rights, are essential conditions for the creation of transparent and accountable institutions, for the promotion of a public administration that is responsive to the needs of the population and for the prevention of and fight against all forms of corruption.

To ensure the equality of all people before the law, Governments should eliminate discrimination, promote tolerance and recognize the value of diversity. Measures should be taken to achieve the full participation of women in decision-making at all levels. Strengthening civil society should be a major part of Government policies. Conditions should be established to allow individuals, groups and organizations to organize and function with guaranteed freedom of expression and association, and to mainstream gender awareness at all policy levels.

Efforts should be made to encourage and promote public service policies, at the national and international level, aimed at "putting the citizen first", with special focus on the public use of a service rather than on the public or private status of the provider.

In this connection, it is important to devise strategies of institutional communications aimed at enhancing the participation of citizens in the activities of Governments as a whole, and not only in those that involve them as individuals. This would aim to promote the creation and strengthening of guarantees for individual users by adequately regulating services that are in the public interest but that the State no longer feels it has to direct — establishing independent guarantee bodies, for example — and by assuring the users of a public service of respect for standards and qualitative minimums, with the possibility of reimbursement in the event of failure.

Capacity-building should be enhanced as an indispensable means to establish, strengthen or rehabilitate national public administration structures. Specific requirements should be identified for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in capacity-building and the training of civil servants in the areas of economic and financial management, the creation of jobs, the eradication of poverty, the provision of adequate criminal justice infrastructures and environmental protection. Due consideration could be given to the 20/20 concept. Access

to basic education is one of the main elements of empowerment.

Decentralization of public administration and services, compatible with the overall responsibilities and priorities of Governments, should be encouraged, to respond better to local needs and facilitate local participation. This can be done through the creation of responsive, adequately financed local governmental structures.

The process of globalization means that domestic macroeconomic policies are increasingly influenced by external factors. However, macroeconomic policies are, in the first instance, the responsibility of Governments, and all Governments should apply stable, fiscally prudent and socially just monetary and economic policies in order to promote full employment, facilitate trade and ensure an enabling environment for the private sector.

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the international community expressed its readiness to promote sustainable development and prevent damage to the environment. Efficient environmental agencies and institutions are necessary to implement the decisions taken at Rio. In this context, the industrialized countries should closely cooperate with developing countries in order to transfer their technical, organizational and administrative know-how, thus supporting the developing countries' efforts.

Regarding the follow-up to this resumed session, the European Union believes that the General Assembly should recognize that a set of principles on public administration and development should exist, taking into account the diversity of experience at the national and international levels. The General Assembly should base its consideration of possible institutional issues on existing structures and should avoid the creation of any new United Nations mechanism.

The General Assembly should recognize public administration and the strengthening of decision-making structures as one of the cross-cutting themes of all the recent major international conferences, and should consider their possible inclusion as sub-items on its agenda, focusing on good governance issues, in the context of the integrated follow-up of recent major international conferences. The General Assembly should recognize the role of the United Nations and other international organizations in assisting Governments to ensure the maintenance of basic essential government services and functions during crises, and in developing strategies for rebuilding a viable public administration for countries undergoing post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction.

At the intergovernmental level, the main responsibility of the United Nations system in dealing with public administration and development should rest upon the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary machinery. That Council should devote the coordination segment of one of its future substantive sessions to this theme.

The activities of the United Nations on public administration and finance should be optimized, taking into account the priority areas identified by the twelfth meeting of Experts. In this context, the United Nations Development Programme, which is already actively engaged in many of these areas, should play a leading role. A careful assessment should be made, at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels, of means to ensure closer interaction between the activities of multilateral agencies in the field of public administration. Greater complementarity between multilateral and bilateral cooperation programmes should also be promoted.

With a view to providing an adequate platform for the follow-up of the resumed session, the status of the Group of Experts in the United Nations programme in public administration and finance could be considered by the Economic and Social Council, provided that any modification envisaged has no financial implications.

Specific issues related to the follow-up of the resumed session should be considered, within their respective mandates, by functional commissions and expert bodies, including the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on Human Rights, and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, particularly in its ongoing work on corruption.

Efforts should be made to better link institutions in the field of training and research for public administration and management at the national, regional and international levels. Their network should be reinforced to better disseminate available information and better coordinate bilateral and multilateral cooperation in this field.

I wish now to add a few remarks in my capacity as the representative of the Italian Government.

Contemporary society is characterized by processes of globalization whose dimensions are not only economic but also sociological, institutional and technological. These processes are, paradoxically, at the basis of both integration and fragmentation phenomena; they challenge individual States, and the international community as a whole, to take innovative initiatives that address the social risks that are emerging at the global level along with environmental risks.

In this framework, initiatives to reform government and revise the role of the State in development policies and in providing public services must take into account social and economic changes. They must also consider the fact that welfare or integration policies can no longer have a purely national dimension: they entail coordination at higher levels that corresponds to the transnational character that has been taken on by the main social processes and programmes.

In these strategies we must recognize the growing importance of market mechanisms and of the private sector, as well as that of the so-called non-profit, or third, sector, which is playing a greater role in providing social and public-use services. Therefore Governments tend to play a less direct role in economic and social development, while maintaining a central role in ensuring and regulating essential functions such as the maintenance of peace, democracy and public order, the safeguarding of rights, the promotion of social justice and the defence of the environment.

More generally, in relation to development and social services, rather than the traditional direct approaches — characterized by the exclusive use of public structures for providing services, by centralized decision-making processes and by exclusive recourse to government funding for public works and social services — preference should be given to what could be called an indirect approach, which is spreading at the international level, as demonstrated in recent studies done in preparation for the "city summit" — the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements — to be held in Istanbul.

The indirect approach has the following characteristics. In the drafting and implementation of public policies, diverse groups — private businesses, non-profit agencies, citizens' groups and local organizations — participate along with the Government, not as adversaries but as partners. In the indirect approach, there is a tendency towards the decentralization of government responsibilities, emphasizing the role of local governments and the inclusion of a growing number of interest groups in the decision-making process, and a tendency also to use varied forms of funding for carrying out public works and providing social services.

In short, this shows a tendency of Governments to prioritize their role in regulating, facilitating, coordinating and providing incentives and support, rather than taking on direct management duties, unless absolutely necessary.

In relation to the need to create or strengthen guarantees for public-service users and to ensure them constant respect for minimum standards, it would be advisable to take the following initiatives, among others. Procedures should be promoted for determining the minimum standards for each service that do not merely register existing practices or the average capacities of the providers, but that correspond to authentic criteria of quality determined through the participation of consumer representatives, along with experts and administrators.

Another initiative might involve promoting, in relation to set standards, the drafting and implementation of procedures for the periodic assessment of the quality of services, involving the participation of citizens' groups and consumer rights associations; and promoting also the establishment or strengthening of bodies to guarantee citizens' rights in cases of poor administration and, in general, in relations between citizens and government, such as a public defender. Such a body could take on a role of great importance, not only at the national level but also at the local and supra-national levels. One example is the post of Mediator established by the European Union.

These initiatives include also promotion of the establishment and strengthening of control and guarantee instruments from the consumer's point of view, with regard also to conflict management in the service of community interests — for example, in the case of strikes or abstention from work by employees of these services in the course of disputes with the Government.

Capacity-building initiatives for government should also be finalized and developed — at the management and the "front-line" personnel levels — for a culture oriented towards the promotion of participation by citizens and their organizations in the management of services and in decision-making processes, and towards providing the skills and instruments needed to make such an orientation practicable.

I should like now to make a short presentation on the outcome of the Interregional Technical Meeting on Restoring Government Administration Machinery in Situations of Conflict, which took place in Rome on 13-15 March 1996. The meeting focused on developing strategies for rebuilding a viable public administration in countries undergoing post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The following issues were underlined by the participants in the meeting. The role of Governments is of primary importance in rebuilding a viable public administration in countries undergoing post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction. Only the affected Government can legitimately determine how to rebuild society in the wake of a violent conflict, since it best understands the manifestations of that violence in the social, economic and political institutions of that society.

After the cessation of hostilities, one starting-point for the rehabilitation and reconstruction process is an assessment of the existing administrative network.

Social trust can be increased, however difficult it may be to achieve consensus among those who have been combatants, through a predictable legal system, based on the rule of law, in which everyone can engage in social and economic activities knowing that a fair, impartial and predictable system of adjudication awaits any disputes.

Because restoration processes are expensive and time-consuming, citizens should be fully involved. To this end, it is essential to establish a culture of cooperation in order to encourage tolerance and willingness to coordinate operations.

In post-conflict situations, the development of human resources is a most critical activity to replace the base of skills and knowledge that has been lost and to build those skills that can contribute to reconciliation. The international community should be involved, complementing the role of Governments, in the provision of inputs, services and technical assistance.

International interventions are most useful when they are integrated with local development initiatives by building upon what already exists in the country, especially at the community level. Government administrative machineries should not be marginalized by excessive attention to non-governmental organizations, although the role of the non-governmental organizations should be recognized and Governments may allocate certain functions to the non-governmental-organization sector.

Inter-agency coordination and cooperation are essential to the success of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction. It is imperative that the United Nations departments and agencies harmonize their programming in order to cooperate at the field level. In this context, greater attention should be given to joint programming missions to enable interested donors and agencies to consider jointly the conditions of the affected countries.

Efforts should be made better to link institutions in this field — Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations — in order better to disseminate available information and coordinate bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Dominique Perben, Minister for State Reform, the Civil Service and Decentralization of France.

Mr. Perben (France) (*interpretation from French*): I wish at the outset to convey France's pleasure at this resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on the question of public administration and development.

This is indeed a subject to which France attaches particular importance because of the inseparability of good administration and development in all fields. I should like to emphasize the breadth of resources that France is allocating to its policy of cooperation and its special links with many countries represented here. I should like on this occasion to pay a special tribute to Morocco, whose initiative led to this meeting through the Tangier Declaration of 21 June 1994.

It is our conviction, based on a long-standing tradition and on our perception of national realities, that there can be no sustainable development without an administration that stimulates and supports it and ensures that its benefits are equitably distributed throughout the national community.

The question to which this resumed session is devoted is the subject of much debate in professional, university and economic circles within Governments and regional or international organizations. It reminds us that administration plays an essential role because it contributes to a country's dynamism and economic effectiveness. The importance of the question of public administration and development in the framework of the General Assembly is that it allows us to go beyond the traditional divisions over the advantages of one model

over another and to reflect on the existence of the universal values that underlie and legitimize public action.

These values are, primarily, the efficacy and transparency of public action, the competence and honesty of officials, the quality of collective services and their accessibility to all and, lastly, the participation and involvement of citizens.

States must confront new challenges arising from the growing internationalization of economies and the need to increase efficiency while controlling public expenditure. They must also ensure economic growth and meet such vital social needs as health care, the reduction of poverty and illiteracy, environmental protection and the development of infrastructure. All these activities contribute to the attainment of sustainable development.

The difficult balance between social and financial requirements must be sought through the principle of the sound management of public affairs, a goal shared by all States Members of the United Nations. The needs are universal, but they are addressed differently from country to country. The consolidation of the State is a consideration for us all, but the particular difficulties of the least-developed countries must receive priority attention.

The developing countries, affected by the problems of debt and poverty, are seeking consistent and stable development. They are faced, particularly in Africa, with the urgent need to build a modern State, which is the sole assurance of national cohesion and of the primacy of the common good. The State must stand in for civil society when the latter falters while at the same time promoting its development. We know the dangers that exist when the situation is reversed and civil society assumes the role of a weak or inadequate State.

The countries in transition must adapt their political and administrative institutions to democratic reform and to the shift to a market economy. Economic reforms have often outpaced administrative ones. There is a keen awareness, none the less that the market economy can function only if there is an effective administration and a respected legal system that guarantee a state of law.

Lastly, the industrialized countries must address the crisis of public finance and, where needed, adapt their systems of social support. At the same time, they must respond to increased needs for security, solidarity and balanced national development. They must also restore the legitimacy of their administration and modernize their management practices.

Sound management of public affairs requires the State to be effective, impartial, transparent and honest. It ensues from an improvement of the process of devising policies, the adoption of and respect for strict ethical norms and the development of human resources, in particular of training facilities for personnel at all levels. It is also necessary to develop the evaluation of public policies and strengthen the accountability and motivation of those responsible for implementing them. The struggle against waste and corruption is an essential element of this strategy; it is a concern of all countries. It must promote the best possible use of public resources to ensure those collective essential services without which the fundamental rights of the individual are meaningless.

Indeed, the need to take financial considerations into account — justified by the imperative to reduce public deficits — and the need not to stifle individual initiative should not make us forget that, in many countries, the State alone can promote social development. Social services have an essential role to play in preventing the abandonment of rural areas and in seeing to it that services are available where people live and during the accelerated development of large urban areas; they must ensure the functioning of infrastructure, such as roads and hospitals, built at high cost but threatened with collapse by a lack of will and of personnel able to maintain and manage them.

The methods of the private sector and market-type mechanisms have been widely praised as new means of regulating public action. These have the merit of fostering cost-consciousness and a greater sensitivity to user needs.

However, these methods cannot be simply adopted; they must be adapted to specific public endeavours. This adaptation is all the more important when the tasks are those that only the State can undertake, such as security and justice. Furthermore, the user of public services cannot be considered only as a client or consumer, but must be recognized as a full citizen. "Citizen" here must be understood in its original sense: a member of the collective. This concept of citizenship is essential because it alone can ensure equality of access to basic services and the satisfaction of vital needs whose value cannot be quantified.

In this regard, the principles of equality, continuity, impartiality and adaptation to change of public services, which are characteristic of French tradition and are to be found in varying forms in most States of the world, particularly those of the European Union, still seem to me to be of great consequence. Applied in keeping with national specificities, we believe they can and must constitute the basis for consideration of the role of administration in development.

It is also up to the State to establish a legal framework that determines the foundations of and parameters for public action, promoting individual initiative, providing a safe environment for investors and, above all, guaranteeing respect for citizens' fundamental rights. We must recall the primary characteristics of the rule of law: it must be simple, known to all and respected.

The question of the place and importance of the State, the public sector and other participants such as territorial communities can be resolved only on a case-by-case basis, in keeping with the diversity of political, legal, cultural and social traditions and with the evolving needs of society. The boundaries between public and private activities are not sacrosanct and all countries are familiar with the concept of dual administration. However, while the existence of a minimum level of collective functions and regulation cannot be called into question, the State cannot act alone. It must rely on all public and private actors, local communities, entrepreneurs, citizens' associations and groups and non-governmental organizations.

France recently launched an ambitious reform of the State under the sponsorship of the President of the Republic, Jacques Chirac, aimed at adapting public services to the aspirations of our citizens and to the needs of an economy that is open to the world. The central goal of this vital effort is to place public service at the heart of State action while seeking to make the State more effective in its endeavours.

The French policy of cooperation falls within the framework of the objectives of the Agenda for Development now being formulated. It is aimed at strengthening democratic institutions and at the sound management of public affairs with respect for cultural diversity. It is intended above all to promote an integrated approach, taking into account not only macro-economic constraints, but also the objectives of redefining the role and tasks of the State, improving the effectiveness of public services and taking the needs of the populations into account. Special emphasis should be placed on supporting democracy through assistance in preparing elections, programmes on the organization of legislative and governmental work and restructuring the judiciary. These actions, based on partnership, are being conducted in a bilateral and multilateral framework.

France's development assistance, amounting to $8.47 billion in 1994, makes our country the only member of the Group of 7 whose official development assistance exceeds 0.5 per cent of its gross national product and has grown from 0.63 to 0.64 per cent of its gross domestic product. Thus, from 1993 to 1994, it rose from FF44.8 billion to FF47 billion. Above and beyond this financial effort, France is determined, and has already begun, to place the rich tradition of its training institutions for public administration and specialized associations even more at the service of cooperation and development. France supports the involvement of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences in certain activities in this field. An invitation has been extended for the next International Congress of Administrative Sciences to be held in Paris in 1998; I am delighted by this, since it will allow us to pursue our reflections. Lastly, regional organizations — in particular the African Training and Research Centre Administration for Development and the Observatoire des fonctions publiques africaines — could play a role as important channels in the implementation of this cooperation.

France hopes that, at the conclusion of this resumed session, the General Assembly will make clear recommendations with a view to strengthening the capacities of the public administration systems on the basis of the principles of good governance and the recognition of the essential role of the administration and public services in development, and to improving the effectiveness of cooperation in the field of public administration. France will support any effort aimed at strengthening the coordination of cooperation activities and at better exploiting human and financial resources, *inter alia*, through the establishment of programme evaluation procedures. We are doing this both at the national level and in the bodies dealing with the various aspects of the reform of the United Nations. Finally, these recommendations should also be aimed at strengthening the United Nations capabilities for providing support and advice in the field of public administration. In this respect, as in other fields, the work of the United Nations must be pragmatic and functional; it must find simple and effective formulas.

France will continue to support the efforts of the United Nations and of Member States,and hopes that the work of this resumed session will be successful.

The Acting President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations.

Mr. Biegman (Netherlands): The Netherlands fully associates itself with the intervention delivered by Minister Motzo on behalf of the European Union. I should like to make some additional remarks.

We welcome this opportunity to discuss and underscore the role of public administration in development. The role of the Group of Experts and the consolidated report of the Secretary-General clearly confirm the crucial role of public administration as it evolves to adjust to and address the increasingly interdependent challenges of development and their inherent risks.

Governments play a crucial, steering role in the development of their countries and populations, as well as in the containment of conflicts. They provide, protect and develop the legal, regulatory and institutional framework within which their executive branch, the public administration, delivers its functions. Together with the private sector, non-governmental organizations, local communities and the population at large, they play a role in the pursuit of people-centred sustainable development, as reaffirmed by the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. The role of each of the players should be defined, taking local conditions into account.

Efficient and effective public administration is of great importance not only to sustainable development in all countries, but also in countering the challenges of globalization, including the possibility of the exclusion of groups and individuals. Efficient, effective and capable public administration, good governance and participatory development are essential prerequisites for, as well as contributing factors to, sustainable development. It is also important for the recipients to have a sense of ownership in respect of development assistance programmes in these fields. These programmes, moreover, should be aimed at measurable and sustainable results.

Responsive Governments are sensitive to the call for more accountability and transparency, adherence to the rule of law, greater participation by citizens in the process of democratization, and, last but not least, respect for human rights in the civil, political, economic and social fields. All these aspects can be encompassed by the common denominator of good governance and participatory development.

In An agenda for Development, the Secretary-General of the United Nations stated the following about good governance in relation to government:

> "In the context of development, improved governance ... means ensuring the capacity, reliability and integrity of the core institutions of the modern State. It means improving the ability of government to carry out governmental policies and functions, including the management of implementation systems. It means accountability for actions and transparency in decision-making." *(A/48/935, para. 126)*

Where the legitimacy of a government is at stake, this is often due to poor governance and erosion in the delivery of public goods and services, combined with an economic crisis. The accumulation of economic misery and a lack of democratic means to effect change tend to spark or exacerbate violent impulses. Alienated minorities may turn to armed action as a means of addressing socio-economic and political grievances. In addition, a country lacking good government will find it exceedingly difficult to attract the private capital it needs for its development.

One important instrument for promoting good governance and stability is the strengthening of the capacity of a government's public administration and civil service. Furthermore, good governance includes the necessary democratic checks and balances which governments need in order to properly execute their functions. Decentralized execution of government functions can help limit the distance between government and citizen and help promote a better balance between supply and demand with regard to public goods and services.

Whatever their stage of development, all countries need to enhance the institutional capacity of their public administration in order to keep up with advances in our era, when the rate of change is greater than ever. However, the countries in greatest need of reform are often those with the weakest capacity to manage the process. They have insufficient capacity to manage the day-to-day affairs of the country, and yet they have to

operate in an institutional environment which has put strain on much better-equipped administrations.

Some governments are committed to, and prepared to take responsibility for, improving the capacity of their public administration and civil service and developing policies to promote good governance and participatory development, but lack sufficient means to achieve this by themselves. In such cases, assistance by multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations, or donor countries, such as the Netherlands, can render sustainable results. To be successful, programmes of this nature need political support, commitment, ownership and acceptance on the part of the civil servants of the receiving country.

The Netherlands, like many other donor countries, is increasingly focusing its attention on effective and measurable outputs in its development cooperation. The development objectives should be established primarily by the individual recipient countries. The Netherlands will also expect the recipients to make a financial and physical contribution to the programme. The way in which our financial and technical assistance is rendered has moved along with the philosophy of capacity-strengthening: from project to programmatic approaches, from limited time-bound interventions to process-oriented ones, enhanced monitoring and evaluation focused on results and, finally, to promotion of donor coordination.

Public administration has a crucial role to play in providing basic social services to its population. Within this context I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to figures quoted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the Tokyo Conference on Development Strategy last month. According to calculations made by UNDP, $30 billion to $40 billion a year will be needed to provide basic social services to everyone between now and the year 2010. Of this amount, 75 per cent can, and must, be raised by developing countries themselves. The remaining 25 per cent should be provided by donor countries. A restructuring of expected funds would, it seems, be sufficient for this.

The 20/20 initiative can be a very useful instrument in this respect. I hope that at the Oslo conference on the 20/20 initiative, which is to be held from 23 to 25 April, interested developing countries, as well as donor countries, will demonstrate the political will to commit themselves to the implementation of this concept. However, if and when the financial target of the 20/20 initiative is attained, and even if more donors reach or surpass the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance, as the Netherlands did long ago, it will only have the hoped-for effect if there is a sufficiently competent and honest government machinery to administer these important funds.

With regard to the follow-up of this resumed session, The Netherlands does not believe that the Department for Development Support and Management Services is the best-equipped institution. I suggest that we seriously consider giving a leading role to the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis in the analytical and normative follow-up. For operational follow-up, UNDP, which is already actively engaged in the area of public administration and development, and a member of which chairs the working group on governance established within the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, would be the logical choice as lead agency.

In conclusion, let me stress once again that high-quality public administration, in combination with a favourable governance environment and with the participation of non-governmental actors, is a crucial instrument for eradicating poverty, creating employment, ensuring access to health and education, fighting ecological degradation, promoting social justice, preventing conflicts and enhancing the contribution of all sections of society to the pursuit of people-centred sustainable development.

The Acting President: I call on Mrs. Corazon/ Alma G. De Leon, Chairman of the Philippine Civil Service Commission.

Mrs. De Leon (Philippines): The Republic of the Philippines had the honour and privilege of hosting, from 18 to 20 March 1996, the United Nations Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific on the role of public administration in promoting economic development, held at the Asian Development Bank in Manila.

The conference was hosted by the Civil Service Commission, the central personnel agency of the Philippine Government, which I represent, in cooperation with the Local Government Academy of the University of the Philippines and the Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration. It was co-sponsored by the United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the Commonwealth secretariat.

Countries from Asia were invited, and the following participated: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines.

In our view, the Conference came at a very opportune time. In the midst of the very rapid economic growth in Asia and the Pacific there is a need to redefine the role of the state in the lives of nations. With this redefinition come consequent changes in the tasks and mandates of public administration.

The economic success stories of Asia share one commonality: its Governments redirected their role from one of direct involvement in production to the functions of development, regulation and maintenance of an enabling framework. This shift required considerable reform in the administrative machinery in terms of orientation, structures, processes and the so-called people factor. One example of this is participatory development.

The substance, direction and pace of these reforms was the focus of the Manila Conference. A majority of the countries in Asia are already in the process of implementing such reforms, with different levels of success. More specifically, the objectives of the Conference were to analyse and understand the critical administrative dimensions and implications of economic development for Asian countries to varying degrees, especially in the areas of policy-making and management, resource mobilization and public-expenditure management, legal and institutional frameworks and civil-service reform and training. The objective was to compare the relevant experiences of these countries in dealing with these challenges, to synthesize major issues and various experiences in administrative reform and to develop practical recommendations.

In order to do this, the participating countries drew from their own experiences and delved into the role of public administration in economic development in the areas of policy planning and management, legal and institutional frameworks, civil-service reform and training, resource mobilization and public-expenditure management.

Among the issues discussed in the policy-planning and management area is the often overlooked need for sensitivity to cultural characteristics, dialogue with stakeholders and the involvement of non-governmental organizations and the private sector. There is also a need to establish and create institutions to oversee the implementation of reforms, such as a national commission for reform in government and pertinent committees. In relation to this, there was consensus that political stability is essential in successfully implementing policy changes in economic and social areas and, therefore, reform must be prioritized and sequenced realistically.

In delving into the matter of strengthening the legal institutional framework, it was noted that an established legal framework is vital if the administrative machinery is to translate policies into positive action and results.

The interesting issue of utilizing the traditional control-driven approach, as opposed to the mission-oriented exercise of authority, in actual implementation of policy emerged.

A consensus likewise emerged on the need to develop a legal framework attuned to the social, economic and political system of a particular country in the redefined role of the state. More specifically, the current environment in Asia requires more enabling laws within the context of minimizing, and yet maximizing, the role of government and increasing participation of the private sector and the community at large.

Despite differences or variances in legal systems, there was general agreement that extant laws governing administrative systems are too many and are redundant; enforcement is slow, and some laws simply cannot be implemented for a variety of reasons: lack of resources, operational or resource constraints, irrelevance or inapplicability of prevailing conditions.

The matter of civil-service reform in the context of the people factor was likewise addressed. In this regard, there was consensus that civil-service reform has to be undertaken in the context of the new governance paradigm which, among other things, advocates a minimalist government, a bureaucracy that is responsive in the context of the world economy, accountability and a heightened sensitivity to citizens' rights — as opposed to hierarchical accountability.

The implications of the new governance paradigm for civil-service reform and training calls for the reorientation of public servants so that they will have a mentality that supports the principle of a government that does less and accomplishes more, a global vision and flexible organization, greater accountability to the people and to the elected officials of government and fairness in the application of the laws of government. Training

programmes in government must be aimed at introducing the guiding principles of the new governance paradigm.

It was also acknowledged, however, that adoption of the new governance paradigm would have to be calibrated on a country-to-country basis, given the diverse levels of political, economic and social development in the region, recognizing as well that some countries are at the level of transition economies. Even the geographical and topographical features of each country will have to be taken into account.

Attempts in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Pakistan at civil-service reform along the lines of the new paradigm proved enlightening. However, it was acknowledged that an inherent pitfall exists in the drive for administrative reform in the region.

From the perspective of good governance, administrative reforms are desirable. However, it was noted that undue focus on them might lead to optical illusions, to a blurring of their links to economic development or to a demand for public services. As the participants acknowledged, the matter of size or numbers is relative. Reform should, in fact, be related to the need and demands of the public — the citizens — must take into account the distribution and competence of personnel; for reforms are not ends, but means — a forward strategy to prepare the countries for the demands of the coming decade.

In the area of resource mobilization and public-expenditure management, the major consideration was what the public sector should and should not be doing, with a view to having the government assume a helping and guiding role while the private sector takes on a greater responsibility as agent for the social and economic development of the country.

This is a difficult but inevitable issue that all countries in the region will have to confront in the face of drastic reductions in public expenditures, which take their toll on non-personnel and, inevitably, other expenditures. Consideration must also be given to cutbacks and restrictions in external aid, long integral to the operations of the administrative machineries of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The so-called foreign-aid squeeze is definitely affecting the operations of the various bureaucracies in the region.

The various schemes currently being utilized by Asian countries to reduce public expenditures, such as privatization, decentralization and the use of build-operate-transfer schemes, were also discussed. While seemingly feasible and attractive, the longer-term implications of such mechanisms for public-services delivery were discussed at length, with special emphasis on capacity-building and resource mobilization.

The three-day Conference underlined the need for cross-cultural cooperation among countries in Asia — Asians helping Asians — in view of the marked, sometimes radical development of their political systems, social structures and, of course, economies. Transitions, no matter how welcome, are often difficult times. As borne out by the Conference, developments in Asia have brought about stiff challenges to existing systems of civil governance and public-services delivery.

The following recommendations emerged from the discussions.

First, the new governance paradigm deserves wider publication and dissemination.

Secondly, there is shared recognition that countries should learn from each other's experiences in the areas of good governance and institution-building. As a manifestation of Asian unity and cooperation, assistance could be provided to countries in the regions which are emerging from crisis and conflict. Two modes of assistance and exchange were identified: countries with illustrative cases of successful governance could become hosts to other countries willing to learn their actual application; and more successful countries could go to those countries in need of assistance so that, in the process, official interaction could be facilitated with the latter's leaders.

In October 1996, the Philippines will be hosting an international conference on governance innovations, sponsored by the Institute of Governance of Canada, based in Malaysia.

Thirdly, multilateral and bilateral institutions, such as the United Nations and the Asia Development Bank (ADB) could provide the lead in developing and implementing programmes of good governance. For example, the United Nations could continue to strengthen the provision of information and training on such aspects as build-operate-transfer schemes, the establishment of training institutions, the improvement of existing institutions dealing with governance and the provision of information. Specifically, the United Nations could hasten

the setting up of a clearing-house on management development that would include the best practices, which could be accessed by Member countries on a regular basis and at minimal cost, in keeping with the Secretariat's request.

Fourthly, it is suggested that the United Nations could marshal its resources and linkages to help countries adopt good governance theories through the pool of experts which now exists.

Fifthly, the Conference also brought out the need for shared information which countries could use in pursuit of good governance. There is common interest in identifying standards that are universally applicable and good governance practices and insights on how countries perform in relation to these standards and norms. Given this interest, participants agreed that there should be wider publicity and more systematic dissemination of this information on developments in various areas of public administration. It must be stated that the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Committee on Civil Service Matters has begun a systematic approach to carry out this information exchange.

Sixthly, there should also be emphasis on training, seminars and programmes on good governance. The Asian Development Bank was especially mentioned as one possible resource institution that could provide resources for institutionalizing these programmes.

The Republic of the Philippines stands four-square in support of these recommendations. There is currently a reorganization/re-engineering thrust awaiting legislation. We have, in the civil service, implemented the attrition law for the period 1992-1997. Our thrust in the civil service is to continue to professionalize, to humanize and to energize the bureaucracy, for these are essential for good governance.

Finally, I congratulate the General Assembly on convening this resumed session, which will enable us to build the human resources necessary for good governance world wide as we face the next millennium.

The Acting President: I call next on Ms. Elaine Kamarck, Senior Policy Advisor to the Vice-President of the United States of America.

Ms. Kamarck (United States of America): On behalf of President Bill Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore, I thank the Assembly for the opportunity to address this resumed session on public administration and development. We are all here today as part of a quiet revolution that is taking place around the world. In discussions and in our statements, we are sharing experiences from the front lines of a global effort to revitalize the instruments of democratic governance.

Indeed, in country after country, city after city and community after community, there is serious change under way. In the United States, as in many other countries, we are asking difficult questions about what roles Government should play. We are decentralizing authority within governmental units and devolving responsibilities to lower levels of Government. We are decreasing the size of the public service and seeking the most cost-effective ways to deliver services. We are reorienting Government to focus on the customers: the citizens that Government exists to serve. We are simplifying regulations and reducing the burden of regulation on industry. We are setting standards and measuring results.

Why is this going on? A principal reason for many countries is the growing recognition that, as the recent Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development conference concluded, if Governments do not work well, economies do not work well. Indeed, an effective governmental structure is essential for economic growth and development and is a central theme of this resumed session.

However, the demand for change for more responsive Governments is not just driven by economic facts. As the Tangier Declaration, which called for this conference, stressed, everywhere there is demand for a civil service that is more responsive to the needs of the people. There is public demand for greater accountability for public funds and for more participation in determining how those funds are spent. There is public demand for a public service that serves the public rather than serving itself.

The demand for more responsive government has been accelerated by the great changes in information technology and communications. Dag Hammarskjøld was one of the first who foresaw the coming changes in how Governments conduct foreign policy. He noted that the relationship of the diplomat

> "to his own people has also changed ... as a fruit of broader education, of a development of the

democratic system and of the revolutionary growth of the mass media of communication".

Of course, the kind of changes we are discussing in this session are inherent in democratic government. Democracies must continually reinvent themselves if they are to respond to the changing needs and expectations of their citizens.

In the United States, there have been 11 national reform commissions in this century, which bears witness to the fact that democracy is hard work, a process of continuous improvement that does not end.

Therefore, once again in 1993, President Clinton asked Vice-President Gore to look at Government reform. He created the National Performance Review. Our mission in the National Performance Review has been, and continues to be, to create a Government that works better and costs less.

The United States Federal Government employs nearly 2 million civilian personnel and has an annual budget of approximately $1.5 trillion. It will not change overnight. However, we are very pleased to report that we have made some progress in this very difficult task.

After inheriting a Government that steadily grew in size and cost over the previous decades, the Clinton-Gore Administration has cut the civilian workforce by 204,000 people; it is now the smallest workforce we have had since John F. Kennedy was President, over 30 years ago. We have accomplished this downsizing through attrition and by offering employees cash incentives to leave the Government. We have tried at every step to treat Federal workers with the respect that they deserve. We have focused our downsizing on unnecessary layers of management and on processes such as personnel and procurement that frequently hinder the effective accomplishment of an agency's mission. We have done this through a new, productive and innovative relationship with our Federal labour unions.

In addition to downsizing, our reforms have saved $58 billion of the taxpayers' money, and we have proposed sensible ways to save another $120 billion. We are also reviewing the relationship between the Federal Government and state and local governments. This review has resulted in a devolution of power from the Federal Government to states and localities through performance partnerships and other innovative experiments in federalism such as the Oregon Option, a new arrangement which we have negotiated between the Federal Government and the state government in Oregon.

Also, at the President's direction, we are also eliminating 16,000 pages of regulations and working on simplifying and streamlining an additional 31,000 pages of regulations. This Administration is slashing the regulatory and administrative burden of Government on citizens and businesses by nearly $28 billion a year. We have also published customer service standards in 214 Federal Government agencies. When we began this project only three Government agencies had these standards.

We have also cut our budget deficit, which exploded in the previous decade, in half. And we now have, for the first time in a generation, a broad commitment, shared by both political parties, to make Government live within its means, by balancing the Federal budget.

The balanced budget has prompted an even more radical approach to government reform. Last month, Vice-President Gore announced that the next phase of reinvention would involve the creation of performance-based organizations. These new entities, inspired by the British experience with Next Step agencies but adapted to the American situation, will enable us to do more with less in a balanced-budget era.

Our job is far from finished. But under the leadership of the Vice-President, dedicated Federal employees have begun to change the face of Government.

We have had a great deal of help in this endeavour. When one announces a goal of reforming the Government, free advice comes pouring in, and we have taken advantage of all of it. We have learned from companies that have been challenged by global competition and have found new ways to do more with less. We have consulted with our counterparts in over 50 nations, all working towards the same goals.

But our most valuable resource has been the people who work in the Government, the Federal employees themselves. The National Performance Review has, from the beginning, consisted primarily of career civil servants, who know best how Government works and what needs to be fixed.

Making Government work better and cost less is a central theme for the Clinton-Gore Administration. We appreciate the opportunity to share our experiences with

the General Assembly, and to continue to learn from the experiences or other members as well.

The Acting President: I call on Mr. Geraldo Tejerina, Director of the Civil Service of Bolivia.

Mr. Tejerina (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of Bolivia, I convey our greetings to the President of the United Nations General Assembly and congratulate him on his outstanding leadership of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I also thank the Secretary-General for introducing his report on public administration and development, which includes interesting recommendations for national Governments.

Bolivia suffered through a very serious economic crisis in the first half of the 1980s. That crisis was characterized by a sharp decline in productive capacity and by inadequate fiscal, monetary and exchange-rate policies, which led to increased speculation, to the detriment of production. As a result, in September 1985, inflation reached approximately 27,000 per cent.

In August 1985, a major shift took place in our economic policy that included, among other measures, a reform and simplification of the taxation system, a drastic reduction in the fiscal deficit, price deregulation, a reordering of the public enterprise sector and a greater openness to private investment, both foreign and domestic. Basically, Bolivia, like the rest of the relatively less developed countries, understood that preserving order and internal balance in the economic area was a prerequisite for allowing greater development of its democratic system and, in general, for ensuring the well-being of the people.

The new economic policy has been in force for 11 years now, and it has borne fruit. In the last three years, inflation has been at 9, 8 and 12 per cent, respectively. Our gross domestic product grew by 4.6, 4.9 and 3.7 per cent during those years, while the ratio of public-sector deficit to gross domestic product shrank from 6.5 to 3.2 to 2 per cent.

However, we have none the less had to adjust periodically our economic policy directives in order to consolidate these gains. Simply achieving macroeconomic stability was not enough to ensure conditions for a harmonious and speedy growth. To that end, a set of measures was needed to establish the structural basis for that objective, so we devised and developed a set of structural reforms, the most important of which are the following.

One reform is the law on the integrated governmental administration and control system, whose main objectives are to develop and strengthen a State based on law and a democratic regime, to guarantee the efficiency and the effectiveness of the public sector, to eliminate the conditions of impunity that foster administrative corruption, and to integrate the external auditing system for the public sector with the internal control systems of its components.

Also of importance is the law on participation by the people, which recognizes, encourages and consolidates that participation process by including indigenous, rural and urban communities in the juridical, political and economic life of the country. It seeks to improve the quality of life for Bolivian women and men through a fairer distribution and better administration of public resources. It also seeks to strengthen the economic and political instruments needed to improve representative democracy, facilitating participation by our citizens and ensuring equal opportunity in terms of representation.

We have also implemented educational reform, whose main challenges are to ensure reliable, ongoing training for our human resources by dynamic means, through an educational system that can be constantly renewed and improved in order to meet training and development needs. We are also creating mechanisms to control, follow up on and assess the quality of education. Our educational system is intercultural and bilingual, taking into account the sociocultural heterogeneity of the country in an atmosphere of mutual respect among all our inhabitants.

We have also focused on capitalizing and privatizing public enterprises, which encourages greater participation by the private sector in the shared task of economic development. This involves shifting some production and service areas to the private sector, in the case of small public enterprises operating in competitive markets. It also involves injecting new capital from the private sector, either domestic or foreign, into national public enterprises through an innovative, efficient capitalization and administration plan, in collaboration with strategic private partners.

Administrative decentralization is one of the more important structural reforms we have adopted recently. Its main objective is to regulate the administrative

decentralization of our executive power, which, in the framework of the Republic's unified approach, involves shifting and delegating technical and administrative functions that are not exclusive to the national executive power.

The reform of the executive power recognizes for the first time the need to articulate broad national policies, backed by the organic and administrative structures necessary to implement them. Thus were established the ministries for human development, sustainable development and economic development.

In sum, the changes proposed by the Government and the people of Bolivia recognize ethnic and cultural diversity, focus on human development, and redistribute authority and resources. They also improve and integrate governmental administration systems and promote private investment. In essence, they lay the foundations for the desired, but still elusive, modernization. This modernizing approach requires that the State administration be able to adapt constantly to the requirements and the evolution of a modern society.

In this context, it becomes ever clearer that there is a need to adopt policies aimed at strengthening, in particular, first, the relationship between the State and society, with the understanding that the challenge lies in adapting State administrative structures and systems to changing conditions and to the development of society and circumstances, thus allowing greater and improved interaction between those two economic players; and, secondly, an anthropomorphic approach to economic and social development — that is to say, conceiving of the human factor as the prime mover and, indeed, the nerve centre of change.

It is for this reason that the Government of Bolivia thought it fitting to be represented before this Assembly by the agency charged with elaborating the policies and norms that will allow for the harmonious development of human resources in the service of the State. This is most gratifying and sends a clear message about its own identity.

The regulations governing personnel administration in the public sector are based on the following philosophical principles: efficiency, transparency, dignified civil service, hiring and retention on the basis of merit, accountability, impartiality, equal opportunity, non-discrimination and flexibility.

The civil service has been seen as a strategic function of the State because it is the factor that ensures the formulation and efficient implementation of all the other reforms adopted. Joining the civil service is promoted by means of clear public notices, providing us with highly motivated personnel who are paid at the same rates as would be expected in the labour market. The main criterion determining whether civil servants keep their jobs is results achieved, which inevitably creates certain synergies within each public entity and, indeed, within the executive branch as a whole.

One of the major criticisms of the modern State in our countries has invariably been a lack of trust in State institutions, as well as in their role in meeting the complex challenges of tomorrow. The civil service is trying to provide specific answers to this popular concern through transparent processes that are available to ordinary citizens, who in this way can find out not only how, why and for what purpose a particular civil servant was hired, but also how much this costs the State and, above all, what that person's actual contribution is in measurable terms of quantity, quality and cost-effectiveness.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting.

Announcement by the Acting President

The Acting President: I have been requested by the Secretariat to draw the attention of members to General Assembly resolution 50/206 C of 23 December 1995, in which the Assembly adopted several measures on the control and limitation of documentation. The resolution

> "*Requests* members of all bodies to exercise restraint in making proposals containing requests for new reports;
>
> "*Invites* all bodies to consider the possibility of biennializing or triennializing the presentation of reports, to review the necessity of all recurrent documents with a view to streamlining documentation and contributing to savings and to make appropriate recommendations;
>
> "*Encourages* members of intergovernmental bodies:

"(a) To consider the possibility of requesting oral reports, without prejudice to the provision of information to delegations in all the official languages;

"(b) To request consolidated reports on related topics under a single item or sub-item where appropriate and cost-effective". *(resolution 50/206 C, paras. 6, 7 and 8)*

The full cooperation of Member States is necessary if the provisions of operative paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of resolution 50/206 C are to be implemented.

In this connection, I should also like to draw the attention of members to operative paragraph 11 of the same resolution, in which the Secretary-General is requested to submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-first session, through the Committee on Conferences and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, on the implementation of the measures spelt out in the resolution, including information on possible savings.

With regard to the costs of meeting servicing and documentation processing, I should like to inform members that, according to the Office of Conference and Support Services, the current notional cost of one page of documentation in six languages is $916, and the current notional cost of one hour of a meeting of the General Assembly with interpretation in six languages, and support services and verbatim records in six languages, is $6,490.

On the basis of the last figure cited — $6,490 an hour — the cost of a three-hour plenary meeting of the General Assembly is close to $20,000, whether or not the full three hours are utilized.

Given the acute financial crisis and budgetary cuts, delegations should keep those figures in mind. The improvement of the rate of utilization of conference resources and the control and limitation of documentation have become an absolute necessity in the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.